

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10 and 12-20 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 5, 8, 10, 17 and 19 are independent claims.

The Office Action dated March 20, 2007 rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 12-14 and 17-20 as being anticipated by the releasable split bearing illustrated and discussed from col. 3, line 5, to col. 4, line 9, of U.S. Patent No. 5,169,244 issued to Craig Siebert et al. (this releasable split bearing hereinafter being referred to simply as "Siebert"). Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication that claims 15 and 16 contain allowable subject matter, as well as the Examiner comments in part 5 on pages 6-8.

The Responses to Arguments considered applicant's arguments as to the differences between the claimed invention and Siebert. While the differences were acknowledged, the Office Action states that several of the argued features were not explicitly included in the language of the claims.

Applicant has therefore amended the language of all of the independent claims, and the language of some of the dependent claims, to explicitly include the features which have been discussed. Specifically, the claims have been amended to state that the front and rear faces of the elastomeric member are perpendicular to the axis of the central opening; a continuous hinge configured as part of the elastomeric member; that the first and second flange members are generally perpendicular to the axis of the central opening; and that the saddle portion is formed between the flange members and extends substantially the entire length of the elastomeric member. Independent claims 5 and 8 each require outer seal member elements not found in Siebert that are separate from first and second flange members.

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, are not anticipated by Siebert for at least the reasons previously discussed between the Examiner and applicant. The prompt mailing of a Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

A petition for Extension of Time accompanies this Amendment. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the extension fee, and any additional fees necessary for the consideration of this Amendment, or to avoid abandonment of this application, to Deposit Account No. 10-0100 (Dkt. No. RESEM.P003).

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Bauer".

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